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COMMISSION ON STATE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION  
FINAL REPORT

WELFARE

Survey Unit No. 12

December, 1949

Howard L. Russell, Project Director

Marjorie Case, Project Associate

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## CHAPTER I

### ORGANIZATION OF THE PUBLIC WELFARE SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

#### A. Existing Organization

##### 1. Agencies Included in this Study

The welfare functions of the state government examined by the Welfare Survey Unit includes all provisions for extending public aid directly to needy persons. These functions are sometimes described as "outdoor relief". They also include public social services as exemplified by child welfare services.

Public assistance is provided to specific and carefully defined categories of needy people such as the aged, the blind and dependent children. Such assistance is provided through categorical assistance programs called Old Age Assistance (OAA), Aid to the Blind (AB) and Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). These programs are state-administered, but jointly financed by the state and federal government and in the case of ADC also by local government.

Relief for needy people who are not eligible for categorical assistance is provided by the towns with the state sharing the cost. This type of aid is called General Relief, or sometimes "Poor Relief". The towns also provide almshouse, institutional and hospital care for needy persons, being reimbursed for expenditures made in behalf of state paupers.

Needy veterans and their dependents receive public aid through the Soldiers' Sailors' and Marine Fund administered by the American Legion on a state-wide basis.

The state-administered child welfare program has general supervision over children who "require the care, protection or discipline of the state". Besides providing a variety of social services, this program involves large expenditures for the maintenance of children outside their own homes. Local government pays some of these costs and the federal government finances a special child welfare program within the state.

In addition to public assistance and child welfare which represent the major public welfare programs, the Division of State Aid and Collections conducts two large financial operations. (1) the collections for the cost of care in all state hospitals and (2) the reimbursement to towns of the cost of general relief given to state charges.

The Public Welfare Council is primarily a planning and research agency for public welfare, but has acquired some administrative and supervisory functions such as the inspection of state institutions and licensing of homes for the aged.

The various programs are administered by the following state agencies, all of which are included in this study:

The Soldiers' Sailors' and Marine Fund  
The Public Welfare Council  
The State Department of Public Welfare, including

The Office of the Commissioner of Welfare  
The Division of State Aid and Collections  
The Division of Public Assistance  
The Division of Child Welfare.

## 2. Size and Scope of Programs

The combined expenditures of the state welfare agencies listed above for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1949, totalled \$20,072,677.85, of which \$18,684,963.80 was for public aid and care, \$1,373,815.73 for administration and services, and \$13,898.32 for capital outlay.

As of June 30, 1949, the number of cases receiving public assistance was:

	Cases	Children
Old Age Assistance	16,846	
Aid to the Blind	182	
Aid to Dependent Children	3,499	8,493
	20,527	8,493

For the calendar year ending December 31, 1948, Connecticut towns expended \$4,824,492.55 for general relief, almshouse and institutional care and hospitalization. Of this amount, \$2,052,508.92 was reimbursed by the state, leaving a net expenditure for the towns of \$2,771.983.63.

Of the total expenditures by the towns, \$2,137,899.00 was spent for general relief in giving aid to a monthly average of 4,165 cases totaling 9,404 persons.

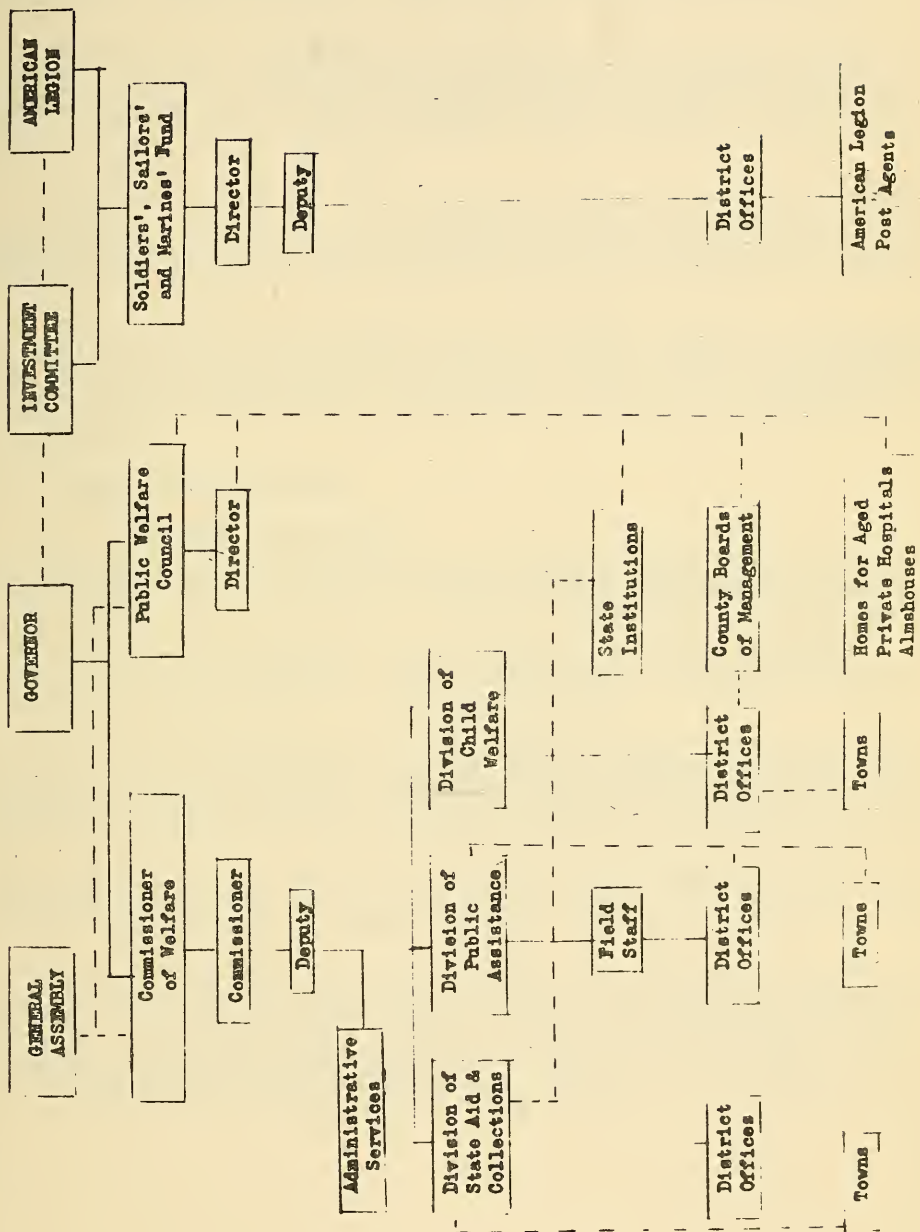
The Division of Child Welfare continually has responsibility for the placement and supervision of more than 5,000 children committed to the Commissioner of Welfare and the County Boards of Management.

On June 30, 1949, the Soldiers' Sailors' and Marines' Fund had an active caseload of 896 veterans or their dependents. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1949 this agency dispensed \$542,455.02 in public aid.

## 3. Objectives of Existing Programs

By statute, the State of Connecticut has assumed responsibility for the care of a person who "has not sufficient means to support himself on a reasonable standard of health and decency and who has no person liable or able to support him".

This type of governmental responsibility may be traced back to colonial days. It was in years past expressed in terms of "poor relief" administered by towns that was generally limited and punitive in character. Expansion of the state's responsibility for needy people has been a development of the past two decades, that has recognized the change in economic and social life which has made the larger part of the population dependent on a cash wage and increased the hazards of economic support for a larger number of people. Modern welfare legislation also recognizes that there is a minimum level of subsistence below which large numbers of people cannot fall without endangering the welfare of all citizens.



In line with this modern concept, Connecticut laws provide minimum subsistence care to all needy citizens. The care is administered, however, through a variety of programs, each serving a carefully defined group of needy people and with separate and different standards applied to each group.

To carry out the explicit objectives set forth in the welfare statutes implies a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated public assistance program that will administer public assistance to all needy persons equitably and without discrimination as regards age, settlement, cause of need or other arbitrary distinctions as to eligibility. This Connecticut does not have.

Connecticut statutes also establish the responsibility of the state for needy delinquent and neglected children. A variety of public child welfare services are authorized to allow the Division of Child Welfare to carry out effective supervision of the children who require the care, protection or discipline of the state.

Legal provisions for child welfare services represent collectively a clear mandate to give adequate and construction care to all children who need it. The statutes in question, however, have been accumulated on a piece-meal basis over a long period of time with little attention given to proper organization, distribution of cost or coordination of services.

#### 4. Overall Considerations

##### a. Historical Development

Connecticut, like most Northeastern states has built its public welfare programs piece by piece with a resulting "patchwork" quality that presents some obstacles to efficient and economical administration.

The first overall state welfare agency, the State Board of Charities, was established in 1873 with its major responsibility the visitation and inspection of state institutions.

In 1919, the General Assembly passed two important welfare measures (1) an Act providing for widows having dependent children (Widow's Aid Law), and (2) an Act concerning the Administration of the law concerning State Paupers and indigent persons. To administer these two laws, a Department of State Agencies and Institutions was established.

In 1921, the State Board of Charities was reorganized as the Department of Welfare with two operating Bureaus: The Bureau of Child Welfare and the Bureau of Adult Welfare.

The General Assembly, in 1935, enacted the Old Age and Blind Assistance Law and directed that welfare functions should be administered by one person and thereby created the Office of Commissioner of Welfare. The Commissioner of Welfare assumed all functions of the Department of State Agencies and Institutions; the remaining functions of the Emergency Relief Administration, and took over the Bureau of Child Welfare from the Department of Welfare.

In 1937, the Department of Welfare was replaced by the Public Welfare Council which was organized as it now exists, retaining miscellaneous welfare functions not specifically assigned to the Commissioner of Welfare.

The Commissioner of Welfare organized his welfare responsibilities as follows:

Office of the Commissioner  
Division of State Aid  
Division of Institutions  
Bureau of Old Age Assistance  
Widow's Aid Division  
Division of Child Welfare

When the Aid to Dependent Children program replaced Widow's Aid, it was joined with Old Age Assistance to form the present Division of Public Assistance.

In 1942, the Division of State Aid and the Division of Institutions were merged to become the present Division of State Aid and Collections.

The Soldiers' Sailors' and Marine Fund was first set up in 1919, and the organization has continued as first constituted except that the size of the Fund has been increased from time to time.

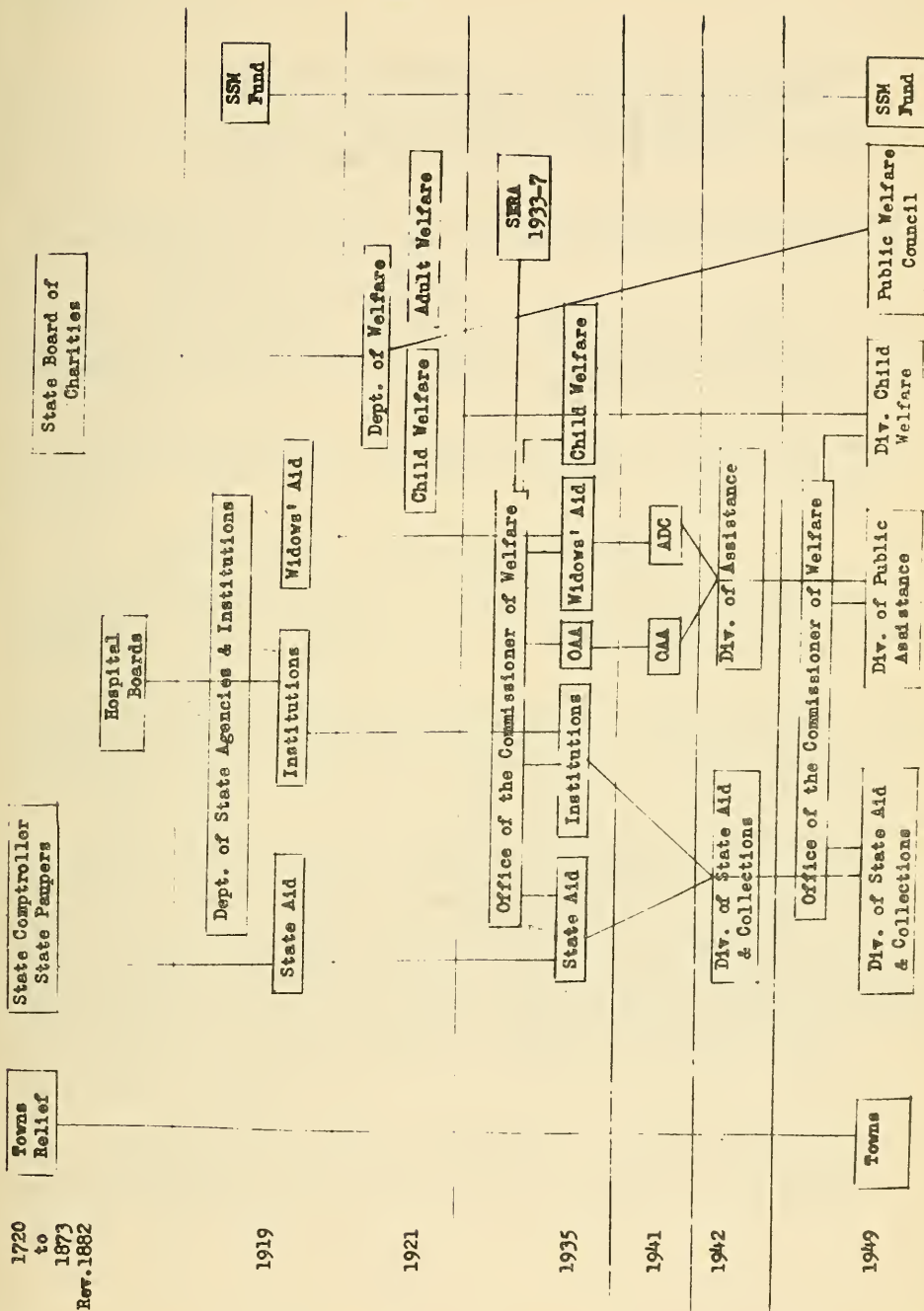
#### b. Previous Studies and Recommendations

Connecticut's public welfare programs have been the subject of frequent scrutiny during the past decade, but relatively few of the major and sometimes repeated recommendations have received serious consideration and even fewer have been carried out.

Some of the more persistent recommendations are listed below:

1. Reorganize the Public Welfare Council to become a policy Board for the Department of Welfare and divest the Board of administrative responsibilities.
2. Give legal status to the so-called Department of Welfare to encourage the development of a comprehensive integrated and coordinated state public welfare program.
3. Eliminate the duplication of town and state investigations of State Pauper cases.
4. Waive collections for cost of care in tuberculosis sanatoria
5. Integrate the internal operations of the Department of Welfare to counteract excessive specialization and segregation.
6. Eliminate or take over County Homes for Children

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7. Eliminate recommitment of children at age six from Commissioner of Welfare to County Commissioners.
8. Change the administration of the Soldiers' Sailors' and Marines' Fund from a private agency to a public commission.

To some of these proposals, valid objections have been raised, but others are as pertinent today as when they were first made.

c. Statutes and Regulations

The laws which have authorized existing public welfare programs present a confusing array of separate sections, many of which have been enacted with little thought as to where or how a new function was to fit into the total pattern of public welfare activities.

With the exception of the statutes covering categorical assistance which are more recent and well-organized, it would seem appropriate to suggest a thorough job of recodification of all welfare statutes.

d. Relationships to the Federal Government

The Federal Government is an important partner of the state in financing the categorical public assistance programs of Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, and Aid to Dependent Children, and in general child care services.

The Federal Social Security Act passed in 1935, was based on an assumption that following the liquidation of earlier Federal emergency relief programs, the Federal Government would continue in part to meet the economic needs of unemployable persons and the state and local government would assume the cost of aid given to employable persons.

While this basis of the distribution of costs was not followed literally, it was roughly followed by the agreement of the Federal Government to match state and local expenditures for categorical assistance dollar for dollar up to certain specified maximum grants per case. In the initial years of operation of the Federal Social Security Act, the Federal Government actually financed 50% of the total cost of categorical assistance programs. But with the pressures in recent years of the rising costs of living, the states generally have increased their average case grants faster than the Federal Government has lifted its ceilings on grants. The result has been that the Federal Government has frequently paid less than half the cost in all categories and in the case of Aid to Dependent Children, frequently less than one-third.

This situation is true in Connecticut. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1948, the Federal Government paid 36.8% of the cost of categorical assistance; 44.5% of OAA costs; 50.8% of AB; and only 26.3% of ABC costs.

The use of Federal funds for public assistance entails the acceptance of certain conditions or minimum standards. In this connection, much is heard of Federal interference or dictation. In practice, federal supervision can be irritating, but in general the minimum standards imposed have contributed both to a sounder program and more effective administration.

The proportion of federal funds spent on child care (other than assistance) is far less and covers chiefly protective and preventive services to uncommitted children in their own homes. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 1949, not more than 3% of the funds expended through the Division of Child Welfare came from federal sources, although substantial additional federal funds were available for this purpose in that year.

#### e. Relationships to Local Government

State public welfare administration the country over offers two general types of administration -- (1) state administration with or without local participation in costs and (2) state supervision of local administration with always some degree of local financing.

In both types, actual administration except for financial operations is decentralized to local political subdivisions. The most common local unit is the county which generally offers a sufficient case load to warrant the use of full-time trained and qualified workers.

New England with its under-developed county governments and its strong emphasis on town government offers difficult problems in the local administration of public welfare. Many small towns have but a handful of welfare cases which are handled with casual interest. Only the cities can afford a regularly organized welfare unit.

In Connecticut, a categorical assistance is administered by the state, but town officials are asked to receive and transmit applications for such aid. General relief, however, is administered by the towns including the relief given to State Paupers which is paid for by the State.

In its relations with the towns, the State Department of Welfare gears its policies and procedures to the least competent and able town officials and reinvestigates every case for which the town asks reimbursement. This is not only irritating to those towns and cities which do a competent administrative job but it represents a costly duplication of effort.

The situation raises pointedly the question of whether general relief should not be taken over completely by the towns with a lump sum subsidy from the state or whether the state should not assume the administration of general relief. The prospect that the Federal Government will one day match general relief expenditures on the same basis that it matches categorical assistance suggests the logic of putting general relief on the same administrative basis as CAA, and ADC.: namely, state administration.

It should be noted here that local government in Connecticut now pays 30% of the cost of the Aid to Dependent Children program even though it is state-administered. The towns also pay three-tenths of the cost of the care given to children under six years of age who are committed to the Commissioner of Welfare, and to non-committed children under sixteen years of age who are placed temporarily in foster homes or institutions.

Connecticut law permits the Commissioner of Welfare to delegate the administration of categorical assistance to town officials or town welfare departments as he may see fit. Contracts have been worked out with five towns on what is called "the local participation plan". The experiment seems successful as far as it has gone. In spite of the reputed strong belief in "home rule" or "local administration", few additional towns are making for the "participation" plan. The Commissioner of Welfare is loath to promote the plan beyond the experimental stage unless the Assembly grants him stronger supervisory authority and he believes that such authority would be resented by town officials.

#### 5. The Department of Public Welfare

There is no legal basis or authorization for a State Department of Public Welfare in Connecticut.

While it may be a quibble in semantics, there is basis for assumption that the formal authorization of a Department of Welfare would be conducive to better organization and administration of the public welfare functions of the state.

#### 6. The public Welfare Council

The Public Welfare Council made up of outstanding volunteer citizens may be regarded as the overall planning body for public welfare. It is so regarded by the public and the General Assembly and its research functions are authorized by statute. In practice, however, this function is frequently submerged in the welter of miscellaneous administrative and supervisory responsibilities which the Council has inherited or acquired.

A total public welfare program that involves expenditures of more than twenty million dollars annually and one that directly affects the lives of thousands of adults and children in the state would seem to deserve and could well afford a Board solely concerned with studying its operations and guiding its development.

State Boards of Welfare made up of informed lay citizens have proven their value in virtually every state in the country. They have operated to keep welfare programs out of politics, they have interpreted welfare problems to the public, they have brought objective leavening to the formulation of welfare policies and they have contributed to improved public welfare administration.

The existing Public Welfare Council is equipped to do this sort of thing for Connecticut's State Department of Welfare, but to do so effectively, it should be relieved of its present administrative and supervisory responsibilities.

#### 7. The Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund

This Fund was established in 1918 after World War I in lieu of a state bonus and to provide a direct relief program for Connecticut veterans and their dependents. It is administered by the American Legion.

It was organized with deference to veterans groups which customarily demand that veterans' programs be given independent status and be administered by veterans. This attitude includes the desire to protect the veteran from the stigma of applying for public relief.

The limitation of expendable money to interest and current income early caused a restriction of veterans' relief to "temporary care only" with the result that most veterans and their dependents are eventually referred to the public assistance office if their need continues. Additional self-imposed restrictions on eligibility based on "worthiness" further limit the usefulness of the Fund to veterans.

An objective view of this agency would raise serious question of whether the program is needed.

#### 8. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Existing Public Welfare Organization

Connecticut has provided the typical and accepted programs for giving public aid to its needy people and for giving care and protection to its needy and neglected children. The state has made a creditable effort to finance these services adequately.

In organization and administration, however, the public welfare services reflect a piecemeal construction of its organization and an ineptness in overall administration that is a serious handicap to effective operations.

The welfare statutes exert no influence toward the integration and coordination of the public welfare services, but in fact, encourage a degree of specialization and separateness that breeds wasteful duplication.

The good standards of administration maintained in the categorical assistance programs prompt the question of why these same standards could not be applied across the board in all programs and to include general relief now administered by the towns.

Town administration of general relief in Connecticut leaves much to be desired in its lack of uniformity and variable adequacy. It involves a costly duplication in respect to state reimbursement for state cases.

All public welfare programs have significant common denominators. They frequently deal with the same family groups. They use similar budgeting procedures and standards. Financial procedures are similar. The success of one type of service may depend upon the availability of another type of service. Every argument exists for the closest cooperation and coordination of all the state's public welfare program.

A single comprehensive public welfare program administered through a Department of Public Welfare suggests itself as the logical means of obtaining the desired coordination of Connecticut's public welfare services and improving the administration of existing programs.

#### B. Proposed Organization of Public Welfare Services in Connecticut

Connecticut should bring together all of its public assistance and child welfare services to form a comprehensive public welfare program administered by a single agency. Such a program would offer the best assurance of getting the greatest value for the state's welfare dollar and at the same time provide the most effective services to the state's needy citizens.

The major elements of a comprehensive public welfare program already exist in the State of Connecticut. Most of the services that should be together are already allocated to the Commissioner of Welfare.

The changes necessary to reach this objective are as follows:

1. Establish a Department of Public Welfare to be administered by a Commissioner of Welfare, appointed by the Governor and to serve at his pleasure.
2. Create a State Board of Welfare composed of seven citizens serving without pay and appointed by the Governor with overlapping terms to study, recommend and report to the Governor on all aspects of public welfare. This Board would replace the existing Public Welfare Council.
3. Transfer the administration of General Relief from town to state government and integrate it with categorical assistance in the Department of Welfare at the same time substituting residence for settlement as a basis for distributing relief costs.
4. Eliminate the Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund
5. Transfer the collection of the cost of care in state institutions from the Commissioner of Welfare to a state agency concerned with the operation of state hospitals.
6. Re-distribute the miscellaneous administrative and supervisory functions of the Public Welfare Council to appropriate state agencies.

These changes require legislative sanctions. They need not require any radical change in the present distribution of welfare costs. They would open the door to better administration and increased effectiveness of all public welfare services.

## 1. A State Department of Public Welfare

Many citizens of Connecticut believe there is a state Department of Welfare. Such a Department did exist from 1921 to 1937 when it was abolished to create the Public Welfare Council. In addition, annual reports have been issued jointly by the Commissioner of Welfare and the Public Welfare Council under the title of Department of Welfare in one of its recent Public Acts. Nevertheless, there is now no legal authority for a state department of welfare. All Welfare functions are now allocated to the Commissioner of Welfare as an individual.

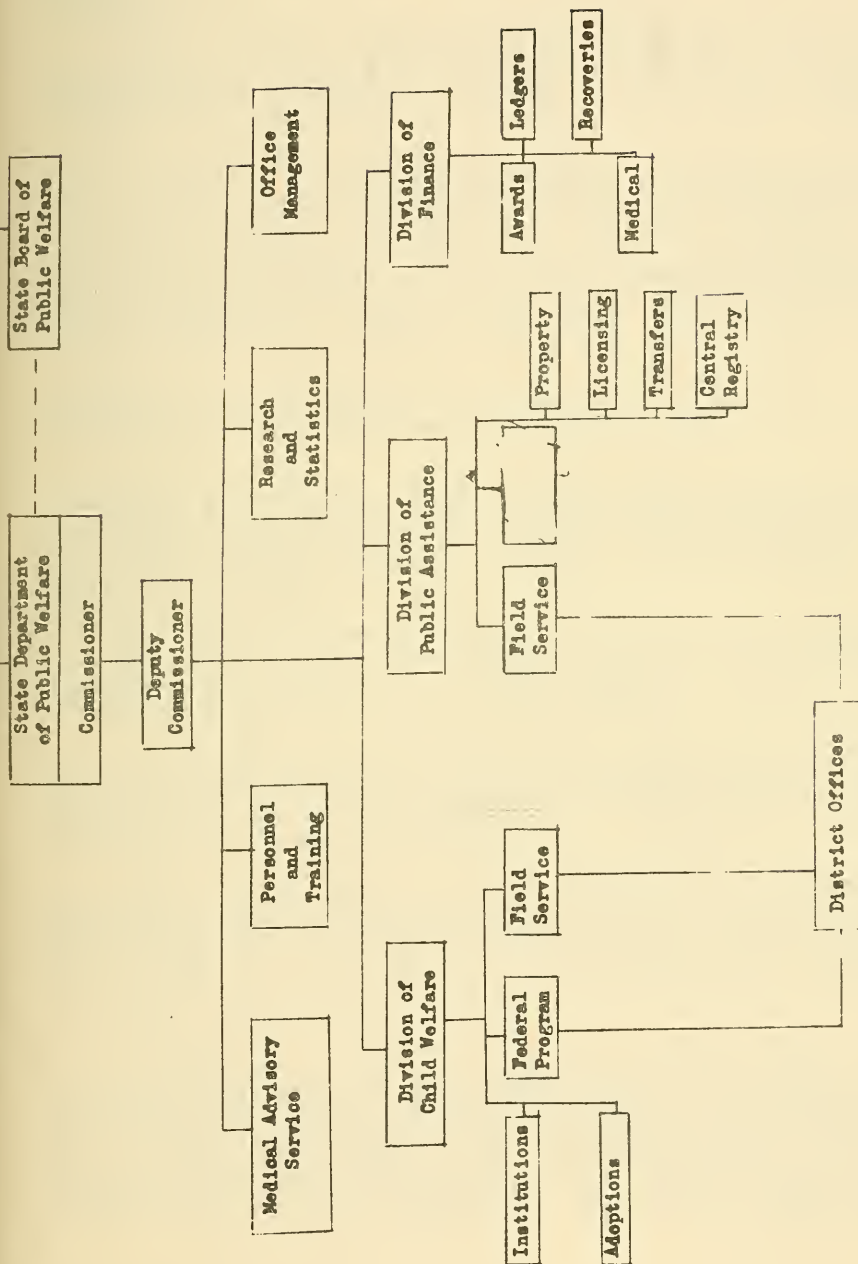
The proposed State Department of Public Welfare would acquire all functions now allocated to the Commissioner of Welfare. It would acquire responsibility for general relief. It would have responsibility for licensing homes for the aged. It would relinquish responsibility for collecting the costs of institutional care. State Aid would be automatically eliminated by the assumption of General Relief. It would assume responsibility for the central registry and social service index and for licensing for charitable solicitation.

A chart giving effect to these proposed changes is attached (page 10-A). The chart is furnished to illustrate functional arrangement rather than line organization. It is important that legislation authorizing a Department of Public Welfare avoid reference to line organization which would be left to the discretion of the Commissioner.

In twenty-two states, the Commissioner of Welfare is appointed by the Governor. In thirteen of these states, the Commissioner serves at the pleasure of the Governor while in nine states, the appointments are for a specified term, generally four years.

In twenty-one states, the Commissioner of Welfare is appointed by a State Board of Welfare although in four of these states the appointment also requires confirmation by the Governor or the legislature.

Direct appointment of the Commissioner which is here recommended, is required by the "cabinet" plan of state government which aims at a definite location of authority and responsibility in the chief executive, arming him with powers to compel coordination and to impose on all branches of the administration the general policies which are formulated by the chief executive. The very nature of a public welfare program should make it responsive to public opinion and this is best accomplished by relating the head of the department to the chief elective officer of the state. The wholly desirable continuity of administrative skill and competence in administration is obtained through the maintenance of a merit system for all employees except the Commissioner and his Deputy. Continuity in long-term planning is



obtained through over-lapping terms for members of the State Board of Welfare.

There is no way of guaranteeing the excellence of appointments by a Governor. To specify in the law, that the Governor must appoint as Commissioner of Welfare, a experience tends to exert influence toward a better selection.

In many states the position of Deputy Commissioner, not under civil service, is considered a political plum and the incumbent becomes a liability to the Department. The Deputy Commissioner is in a strategic position to integrate and coordinate the complex activities of a welfare department but to do so he needs administrative skill and experience and a thorough knowledge of the various welfare programs. Definite qualifications should be required in the law for the position of Deputy Commissioner or the position should be placed under civil service.

The major program change involved in the establishment of a Department of Public Welfare is the assumption by the state of the General Relief program now administered by the towns.

Administratively, the general relief program is identical with categorical assistance in methods of determining eligibility, establishing need and serving the applicant. Policies and standards are similar and should approach uniformity. The categorical assistance programs are already organized to provide complete geographical coverage.

The transfer of General Relief to the state could be made in such a way as to preserve the present distribution of welfare costs as between town and state or it could provide the opportunity to extend financial relief to the towns if desired.

The assumption of the general relief program by the state would be in line with the trend in federal welfare legislation and would simply anticipate the expected Federal matching of general relief expenditures a condition of which would be integration of general relief with categorical assistance.

This transfer, together with the substitution of residence for settlement in distributing the costs of public aid would eliminate State Aid entirely with administrative savings to both towns and state. With the exception of a sentimental plea for "Home Rule" there is no valid argument nor difficult obstacle in the way of such transfer.

## 2. A State Board of Public Welfare

The operation of a single comprehensive public welfare program by a State Department of Public Welfare calls for the use of a citizens board which would serve in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner; set as a long-term planning agency in appraising needs of people and ways of meeting those needs; study, analyze and report on the administration of the welfare progress to the Governor, the General Assembly and the public; evaluate and interpret the complex welfare

activities to the various communities in the state; and approve regulations as to eligibility for assistance and its extent.

Virtually every state in the union uses a state board of welfare for these purposes and about half the states endow their boards with some administrative responsibility such as the appointment of the Commissioner. The typical state board is one of five or seven members appointed by the Governor, sometimes with legislative approval and with overlapping terms to provide continuity of membership. Where state boards appoint the Commissioner of Welfare, it is generally their prerogative to approve policies, rules and regulations.

It is recommended that the State Board of Welfare be composed of seven citizens of the commonwealth appointed for overlapping terms of six years by the Governor. No member of the Board should hold office in any political party. Four members of the Board should form a quorum. The Board should hold at least six regular meetings each year. The Board should elect a Chairman from its membership and should elect a Secretary who need not be a member of Board and who may be the Commissioner of Welfare.

The powers and duties of the State Board of Welfare should be:

- a. To approve or disapprove and adopt rules, regulations and standards, consistent with the law, recommended by the Department of Public Welfare as to eligibility for assistance as to its nature and extent.
- b. To study the work of the Department of Public Welfare and from time to time, to recommend to the Governor changes in administrative policy or in the law.
- c. To study current information constantly and to report at least annually, to the Governor, as to the nature and need of public assistance and child welfare services and to cause such reports to be published for the information of the public.
- d. To hear appeals from individuals and to make final decision on such appeals as to eligibility for, amount and duration of public assistance.
- e. The Board shall have access to all information and records in the Department of Public Welfare and may require the Department to furnish whatever help is necessary to carry out its studies and develop its reports.
- f/ The Commissioner of Welfare shall attend all meetings of the Board, may not as its secretary but shall not have a vote.
- g. The Board should be empowered to take any other action authorized or required by law.

### 3. Agencies Eliminated

The proposed single comprehensive public welfare program, administered through a State Department of Public Welfare assisted by a State Board of Welfare, both directly responsible to the Governor, serves to eliminate several existing agencies and activities.

The Public Welfare Council would be replaced by the State Board of Welfare and its several administrative and supervisory functions redistributed as suggested later in this report.

The Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund would be eliminated.

Through substitution of residence for settlement as a basis for distributing the costs of general relief plus the transfer of general relief to the State Department of Public Welfare, the entire present program of State Aid would be eliminated.

The entire administrative operation of collecting the cost of care in state institutions would be transferred to the state agency concerned with operating state hospitals.

The simplified structure of the State Department of Public Welfare would facilitate the several internal organizational changes suggested in the general findings.

### 4. Findings Related to Specific Programs and Agencies

#### a. Office of the Commissioner of Welfare

Failure to include a portion of the administrative costs of this Office in public assistance administration costs matchable by the Federal Government has lost to Connecticut in the last decade an estimated \$113,000 in federal funds.

An obvious function of this Office is to promote the integration and coordination of the several major programs under the direction of the Commissioner. In practice, the Office insists on extreme sub-division of administrative function and complete separateness of the major operating divisions.

The position of Deputy Commissioner of Welfare should be filled by a person qualified through training and experience to coordinate the major operating programs.

The Office of the Commissioner of Welfare should provide better administrative services to its major operating divisions.

The organization chart used by the Office of the Commissioner gives proper recognition to all the usual service functions except office management and public relations which are noticeably absent.

In only two instances, the Medical Advisory Service and the Purchasing Unit, does the quality or scope of the service reach an acceptable standard.

The Personnel and Financial Control functions as shown on the chart are managed by the Commissioner's secretarial staff and contain no element of service to the operating divisions. Personnel management and financial operations are dispersed through all divisions and branch offices.

A qualified Personnel Director experienced in personnel management could serve all major divisions and relieve scores of scattered executives and clerks of personnel responsibilities which are now only an irritating and time-consuming sideline. Such a Personnel Director would also more effectively interpret the needs of the Welfare Department to the state civil service.

The so-called Financial Control Section refers only to the maintenance of fund ledgers and has nothing to do with the major financial operating units of the department. The financial operations of the Department are of a size and complexity to warrant the use of a top-notch accountant who could take responsibility for all financial and auditing functions. This position could properly be given deputy status if it included direction of all strictly administrative services as well as financial and auditing functions.

The Welfare Training Section represents a good organizational idea which has not been effectively carried out. The various divisions fail to request or use the services which are available. This situation, involving both personalities and differences of opinion as to the services required should be straightened out by the Commissioner; if not, the Section should be eliminated.

The Purchasing Section gives service to all divisions in handling requisitions for supplies and equipment; in maintaining an inventory of equipment and in operating a fleet of state-owned cars. These services are given with conscientious and meticulous deference to state procedural regulations, but reflect no responsibility for seeing that the department is tooled up for efficient work.

The Purchasing Section is responsible for office management only by virtue of its control of inventory and its handling of requisitions for equipment. Each unit and section head throughout the Department is his own office manager and few are aggressive enough to cope with the long line of veto-minded officials, both within and without the Department, who process requisitions. Shocking examples of inadequate office space, poor equipment and lack of equipment are not only frequent, but persistent and constitute an extravagance in operations that should not be condoned by any administration.

Since salaries represent 92% of all administrative costs, the provision of good working conditions and proper tools for employees to work with can only be regarded as a proper economy. An obvious first step is to recognize the place of office management among the group of administrative services and then center responsibility on a person who will establish and maintain good standards of office practice.

The position of Director of Statistics has been unfilled for several years, the staff members being theoretically under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. The sole production of this Section is a semi-annual publication of assistance and town relief data which is virtually useless for purposes of administration or for developing public understanding of the program.

The Commissioner has the right to call on the Public Welfare Council for help in research, but this arrangement is unsound and rarely used. The position of Director of Statistics should be filled. The Director should be made responsible for centralizing the collection and tabulation of all statistics for the entire Department and for conducting both administrative and social research as needed.

Public Relations needs both recognition and emphasis in the Office of the Commissioner of Welfare. As an administrative function, it needs more than publicity for it covers all the relationships of the Department with other public and private agencies, the Assembly and the public. It involves both the written and the spoken word and group contacts as well. All top executives need to take some responsibility for exercising this function. It is not always necessary to have a public relations specialist on the staff, but the function itself should be recognized. The existing attitude on public relations is to tell "nobody nothing" and "the less said publicly, the less trouble you get into".

The suggestions made here for strengthening the administrative services in the Office of the Commissioner of Welfare would not necessarily increase administrative costs. In most instances, they involve the centering of administrative activities, that are now scattered all through the Department and its branch offices.

b. The Division of State Aid and Collections

The entire state office operation involving reimbursement to towns for public aid given to state paupers should be eliminated.

This operation represents a complete duplication of the towns' effort in establishing the eligibility of applicants for general relief. Reimbursement is now made on a case by case basis with complete investigation both as to the applicant's settlement and as to the extent of his need.

This operation costing about \$120,000 annually, could be eliminated in one of several ways:

1. By having the state assume responsibility for general relief as it now does for categorical assistance (see chapter IB) the administrative saving in this instance would accrue to the towns.
2. By the state paying the towns a lump sum subsidy equal to the present total of reimbursements on condition that the towns would substitute residence for settlement in granting general relief.

3. By the state matching town expenditures for general relief dollar for dollar on condition that the towns substitute residence for settlement in granting general relief and in addition accept state-wide standards for general relief established by the state department of welfare.

The use of any one of these alternatives would eliminate the existing duplication in overhead. In addition, the elimination of town settlement would eliminate the present costly practice of inter-town billing. Alternative (3) would tend to improve the total general relief program but not as effectively as would the assumption of administration by the state department as described in Chapter I-B.

Should the state establish a single operating agency for all state institutions or for its several hospitals, the collection of costs of care could be handled in that agency as logically as in the department of welfare.

The concentration of collection activities in one administrative unit is obviously more effective than to have separate collection units in each institution or hospital.

The location of this function in the department of welfare is regarded as appropriate since in the determination of the ability to pay, the investigators deal in many cases with indigent people. The association with the public aid programs would seem to offer some advantages in respect to the exchange of informational data but this advantage has not been demonstrated to date.

The many state institutions and hospitals are now separately administered. Should they be brought under a single operating agency, that agency would be most interested and concerned with the collection function. The transfer need involves only the physical moving of staff and records from one agency to the other.

Internal administration in the division of state aid and collections could be improved in several respects.

A large staff of field investigators now operating in small units could profitably be placed under a supervisor of field staff.

All administrative policy and regulations are carried in the heads of two or three executives. A manual of both policy and procedure would increase the effectiveness of the entire staff, would be useful to employees in other divisions of the department and could be used to improve relationships with outside agencies.

The collection of delinquent hospital accounts now scattered among several independent units should be brought together in one spot for more effective control and results.

The clerical staff of this division works under serious handicaps as to space and location. Working conditions are so crowded as to interfere with production and employees of one unit may be found working in another unit and far removed from both supervision and records.

The functions of transfer or deportation seems to be a social service function that should be located in the division of public assistance.

There should be marked advantage in a close relationship of this division with other divisions of the department. The possibilities of such relationships have neither been realized nor explored.

#### 4. The Division of Public Assistance

The categorical assistance programs are organized and administered in such a way that needy blind and aged citizens and dependent children can get public aid of reasonable adequacy.

Average grants for all types of categorical assistance are higher than the National average and meet a minimum standard of decency and health as required by law.

While Connecticut gives public aid to a smaller proportion of its population than most states, there is no evidence that its eligibility requirements are more restrictive except in the requirement of citizenship.

The quality and availability of medical care in addition to the cash grant exceeds the standards of most states.

The processing of applications for public assistance is not consistently done with dispatch.

Pending application of a number greater than one month's intake of new applications is always a danger signal in public assistance administration.

This operating goal has rarely been reached by the Division of Public Assistance. The reason has generally been a matter of insufficient staff but sometimes has been due to the diversion of staff to other activities.

An average accumulation of 1900 pending applications over the past year against an average of 700 new applications monthly would suggest undue hardships suffered by some of the people who request help.

Administrative costs for this Division are well under control and could profitably be increased.

Administrative costs for the categorical assistance programs whether measured as a percentage of expenditures or as cost per month are below the National average and below the costs in other New England states.

This otherwise commendable position has been achieved at the expense of a staff that consistently operates with such high caseloads as to make proper reinvestigation of cases an impossibility.

A minimum standard of one reinvestigation a year for OAA cases and two a year for ADC cases is little enough assurance that all persons receiving grants continue to be eligible for them but visitors with average caseloads of 250 cannot meet even this standard.

Additional visitors to bring the average caseload below 200 would pay for themselves in the assistance saved by the more prompt handling of changes in the status of recipients.

Failure to provide staff with good working conditions and with the proper tools to work with is extravagance masquerading in the name of economy.

Poorly arranged office space, crowded offices, lack of proper equipment and limited transportation handicap the workers in the district offices of this division.

Since salaries constitute 90% of all administrative costs of the Division of Public Assistance, it would be good business to protect his heavy investment in personnel by supplying the equipment and working conditions that would make it most effective.

This glaring administrative error is due in part to a lack of aggressiveness of the division's executives but even more to a false economy practiced by the purchasing, budgeting and legislative agencies outside the department.

The Aid to Dependent children program has not been fully explored or developed as a means of preventing child dependency, neglect and delinquency.

Inherent in the philosophy of the ADC program is the use of the money grant as a means of preventing family disorganization - and thus child dependency, neglect and delinquency.

This division administers an effective ADC program in and of itself but there has been failure to develop the preventive aspects of the program in that it is not integrated as a tool or resource in the states total program of child care. It has done little to interpret the program to the various communities. Joint planning with the division of Child Welfare is weak. It does not participate in the demonstration prevention project sponsored by the Juvenile Welfare Committee.

The Division of Public Assistance suffers most from the lack of research facilities within the department and the lack of organized public relations.

The size of the public assistance program is so large and its nature so complex as to require constant study and analysis both of administrative operations and of trends and changes in the total caseload.

Intelligent direction of the program cannot be given without complete data on administration and sound knowledge of the social problems with which the division is dealing.

Responsible public officials are also accountable to the taxpayers for sharing their knowledge of the social problems and reporting on the methods adopted to cope with those problems.

d. The Division of Child Welfare.

The Division of Child Welfare is not at present fulfilling the responsibility placed on the Commissioner of Welfare for insuring to every child who needs it the care and protection of the State.

Children are committed to the state for whom some other plan might have been made if adequate pre-commitment investigation and treatment had been provided.

Of the children committed to the state, many are still "lost" in the sense that they have no home ties and no individual responsible for their welfare or "lost" in the worker's caseload because she is too overloaded to take time for constructive planning.

Many children under commitment to the County Boards of Management are "lost", are wrongly placed, or remain in county homes for many years beyond their need of it.

Administrative direction and controls are weak.

Administrative and supervisory staff meetings are not a common practice. Supervisors have little part in policy making which affects negatively the whole program. There is confusion in the district offices as to current procedure and policy interpretation. A uniform system of communication such as a manual of state letters is lacking and field supervision has not been developed to bridge the gap.

Child Welfare Services financed in full by federal funds should be strengthened.

Each year, the Division of Child Welfare fails to use the federal funds in full which are made available for a variety of needed services.

The Bristol Project has amply demonstrated the value of "Preventive" services. These should now be incorporated into the regular program of the Division.

The personnel of the Division should be increased in number and improved in quality.

Present average caseloads of 95 per worker should be brought down to the accepted standard of 50 cases. From the standpoint of cost alone, there is a saving to the State of some \$600 a year per child for whom the worker can make a plan other than commitment.

Only 7 out of 99 field workers are graduates of schools of social work. A few others have partial training. Most are college graduates with varying degrees of experience. The very minimum in trained staff is that all consultants and all supervisors be skilled in their jobs and able to teach the rest of the workers.

It is recommended that legislation be enacted to provide that any child for whom commitment is necessary be placed under the guardianship of the Commissioner of Welfare.

This would fix by law the responsibility of one authority for the welfare of the children entrusted to the state and eliminate the existing jurisdictional disputes between state and county in which the child is always the loser.

e. The Public Welfare Council

It is recommended that the Public Welfare Council be replaced by a State Board of Welfare.

The Public Welfare Council is the vestigial remnant of the State Board of Charities operating from 1873 to 1921 and the Department of Welfare operating from 1921 to 1937 when the Council was established.

With the creation of the Office of Commissioner of Welfare in 1935, the major public aid programs of the State were combined in one agency and the Public Welfare Council was left with a curious and illogical collection of administrative, supervisory and research functions.

While the work of the Public Welfare Council since 1937 has been constructive and often important, Connecticut's public Welfare services would be strengthened if the functions of the Council were properly re-distributed and the experience and judgment of its citizen members directed to study and planning through an advisory State Board of Welfare.

Redistribution of Council Functions

(1) Visiting and Inspecting.

The justification for this function, continuously carried out from 1873 to now, is well expressed in a quotation from the Council's 1933 report; namely, "It would appear to be sound policy that in the operation of public and private Welfare institutions, some informed lay opinion should pass upon the humanitarian aspect of the daily lives of inmates of such institutions." The fulfillment of this duty has been by "inspecting property and personnel investigating complaints and elevating the morale of the inmates."

This emphasis on protection of the individual inmate has consistently characterized the visiting function. The Welfare of the inmate has been protected not only by investigating individual complaints but by recommending general standards of operation and care applicable to the entire institutional population.

An increasing portion of the visiting and inspection function has been delegated to staff although Council members still conscientiously make the quarterly visits required by law.

Should the state institutions be placed under a single state operating agency, that agency would properly assume the visiting and inspection function. It is presumed that such an agency would have its own citizen advisory board which would contribute to policy formulation and protect the interests of inmates.

In the meantime, the visiting and inspection function which has become largely an administrative and staff function should be assigned to the proposed Department of Public Welfare with the new State Board of Welfare assuming responsibility for continuous study of the institutional program.

(2) Collection of Data on Pauperism

The actual collection of data on pauperism is now conducted by the Division of State Aid & Collections. It could logically remain there.

(3) Cooperation with the Commissioner of Welfare.

While relationships between the Public Welfare Council and the Commissioner of Welfare in long-term welfare planning and to advise him on policies and practices.

(4) Licensing of Homes for the Aged.

This administrative function properly belongs in the Department of Welfare and should be closely related to the administration of old age assistance.

(5) Licensing for Charitable Solicitation.

This administrative function should be allocated to the Department of Public Welfare.

(6) Approval of Adoptions for State Wards.

The requirement that three members of the Public Welfare Council must sign a petition of adoption for a state ward adds little to the protection of the child for the adoption is necessarily the action of two independent public agencies - the court and the Division of Child Welfare.

It is recommended that this function of the Council be eliminated particularly since the recommended State Board of Welfare would have full authority to investigate and study the adoption procedure.

(7) Council Memberships on County Boards of Management.

Representation of State Welfare agencies on the Boards of Management of Temporary County Homes will continue to be advisable as long as state and county share responsibility for committed children.

This privilege of representation could simply be transferred to the new State Board of Welfare or to the Commissioner of Welfare.

(8) Council Membership on Juvenile Welfare Committee.

Should the Juvenile Welfare Committee continue its demonstration project over an extended period, this responsibility could be transferred to the new State Board of Welfare although the Commissioner of Welfare is already designated as a member of the Committee.

(9) Central Registry and Social Service Index.

The allocation of this operation to the Public Welfare Council is a typical example of the custom of assigning functions to the agency that proposes them.

The establishment and maintenance of a confidential central registry and social service index is strictly an administrative task and should be transferred to the Department of Welfare. The registry will eventually include public assistance and child welfare data and its users will be public and private welfare agencies which would make this transfer appropriate.

f. Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund

The operation of this Fund constitutes a relief program for needy persons which duplicates already established Welfare facilities. As a relief agency, the fund is an anachronism in state government; unsoundly financed, weakly organized and expensively operated.

Welfare costs should be financed from current general revenues. Earmarked revenues used to build up an unnecessary reserve fund results in an unfair distribution of relief costs.

Responsibility for administration of the fund is poorly defined, vague and indirect. Basic responsibility presumably rests on a private organization, the American Legion which holds itself responsible to the State Investment Committee, an agency whose sole legal authority centers on the investment of state funds.

In the past decade, the fund has spent \$2,005,314.16, \$306,612.85 or 15.2% of which was for administration. This represents an unduly high administration cost particularly in view of the fact that a large part of the job is performed by volunteer workers.

Persistent criticisms of the administration of this program have included the following complaints; that eligibility for aid is based on "worthiness" as determined by volunteer workers of the American Legion rather than on a basis of need; that there is little published or written material describing either eligibility or standards; that many Connecticut veterans are ruled ineligible for relief; and that lack of uniform standards results in inadequate relief in some cases and overly liberal relief awards in others.

There is little statistical or analytical data by which these complaints can be confirmed or refuted. A proper evaluation could be obtained only by a detailed case study. The administrative staff, however, agree that there has been some basis for the complaints but point to substantial improvement in administrative practices in the past year or two. This improvement is confirmed by other Welfare agencies who regularly do business with the Fund.

Currently, some local public welfare agencies under pressure of increasing case loads have criticized the fund for referring needy veterans to them instead of carrying the cases on the fund relief rolls. This is a reflection of the policy established by the American Legion but not by law, that Veterans relief is for temporary aid only. The fund takes the position that a needy veteran who is eligible for any type of public aid must apply for it. This policy is not uniformly applied.

The most persuasive argument for continuation of the Veterans Relief program would be the contention that the aid given could not otherwise or elsewhere be obtained by the needy veteran. With the exception of a handful of cases, this contention could not be substantiated.

The insistence of veterans groups that veterans benefit programs be independently organized and administered only by veterans finds considerable legislative and public support and cannot be ignored. It is based in part on the idea that veterans should be protected from the "stigma" of applying for Public relief. The present operation of the program does not, however, protect the veteran from the public relief office.

The comprehensive public welfare program proposed in this report could provide to veterans all the public aid and social services now being administered through the Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund and at lower cost.

NOTE: The recommendations in this report requiring changes in legislation and those directed toward the strengthening of administration are further discussed in detail and with substantiating data in the Final Report of the Welfare Survey Unit dated October, 1949.









